

Rural District of Great Ouseburn.



Dr. J. M. Benson's Annual Report

ON THE

Sanitary Condition of the Rural District of Great Ouseburn, for the Year 1923.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,

I beg to submit my Report for the year ended December 31st, 1923.

BIRTH RATE.—Population 11,030. 194 Births were registered during the year, giving a birth rate of 17.5 (England and Wales for 1923 was 19.7). This figure is practically the same as last year 17.1. The population has decreased, and Agricultural depression, lower wages, and shortage of houses, are factors responsible for a low birth rate. There were 90 Male and 104 Female births. Of this number 7 were illegitimate—2 Male and 5 Females—compared with 10 in 1922 and 17 in 1921.

DEATH RATE.—125 Deaths were registered, giving a death rate of 11.3 per 1,000, a decrease since last year, when the death rate was 12.7, (England and Wales for 1923 11.6). There were 72 Male deaths and 53 Female. Amongst these were 20 persons over 80 years of age, and 1 person over 90 years of age.

INFANTILE MORTALITY.—13 Deaths were registered under 12 months of age, giving a death rate of 67 per 1,000 births, (England and Wales for 1923, 69), compared with 1922, when the Infant Mortality rate was 89 per 1,000 births, the figure is satisfactory. Of the 13 deaths 6 were due to Premature Births, preventable if the Mothers would call in a Doctor as soon as they find they are pregnant, 2 to Broncho-pneumonia, often the result of a neglected cold, Infants being very susceptible to Catarrh, which quickly spreads and involves the Bronchial tubes, especially in infants artificially fed, too warmly clad, or deprived of fresh air which they so vitally need; 2 to Diarrhoea, caused by overfeeding, want of cleanliness in the preparation or storing of the milk, or to improper feeding e.g. irregularity in the times of feeding, unsuitable food, or the use of "Dummy" Teats, which only convey dirt to the child's mouth. *Nothing* can take the place of Breast Feeding in the early months of infant life, no artificial food approaches in value that of the Mother's Milk, in its perfect adaptability to the infants' needs,

rich in the necessary "Vitamins," and, affording, as it *alone* does, a natural resistance to Disease Germs in the early years of a Child's life. Whenever a young Mother, thinks for any reason, that she cannot Breast Feed her Infant, she should consult a Doctor, who can usually prove to her, that, by following a few simple rules, it is quite possible. 1 death was due to Convulsions, in this case found by the Coroner to be due to improper feeding. 1 death was due to Meningitis, probable the result of injury at birth; and 1 death was due to Congenital Malformation.

Among children 1 to 2 years of age there was 1 death from Broncho-pneumonia. Among children 2 to 5 years of age there were 2 deaths, 1 from Measles, a very fatal disease in early life, and 1 from Tuberculosis of the Spine and Brain. Among children 5 to 15 years of age there were 4 deaths, 2 from Heart Disease, following Acute Rheumatism, 1 from Tubercular Meningitis and 1 from Disease of the Spleen (Leucæmia). Among persons from 15 to 45 years of age there were 11 deaths, 3 due to Tuberculosis of the Lungs, 2 to Cancer, 1 to Puerperal Eclampsia (preventable if the woman had consulted a Doctor *as soon as* she found herself pregnant), 1 to Aneurism, 1 to Lymphadenoma, 1 to Pneumonia, 1 to Heart Disease, and 1 from Suicide. Over 45 years of age there were 77 deaths. Cerebral Hæmorrhage 16; Cancer 12; Heart Disease 15; Diabetes 5; Nephritis 2; Senility 11; Bronchitis 3; Arterio-Sclerosis 3; Phthisis 2; Pneumonia 2; and 1 each from the following diseases: Cirrhosis of Liver, Catarrhal Jaundice, Aneurism, Gall Stones, Paralysis Agitans, and fractured Thigh.

ZYMOTIC DISEASES including Tuberculosis.—31 cases were notified in 1923, compared with 54 in 1922. Tuberculosis of the Lungs 8; other forms of Tuberculosis 2; Scarlet Fever 7; Diphtheria 5; Erysipelas 3; Puerperal Fever 3; Pneumonia 2; Ophthalmic Neonatorum 1.

ISOLATION HOSPITAL, ACOMB.—13 cases only were admitted during 1923 for treatment, compared with 31 in 1922. 9 being from the Great Ouseburn Rural District, 5 Scarlet Fever cases, 3 Diphtheria, and 1 suspected case of Typhoid Fever which proved not to be, the remaining 4 cases were admitted to your Hospital from Districts outside. There were no deaths.

SCARLET FEVER.—7 cases were notified, as against 27 in 1922. They were all from Acomb and Poppleton. The disease was again of a mild type, and calls for no comment.

DIPHTHERIA.—5 cases were notified, 2 from Aldborough, 3 Acomb. There were no cases reported in 1922. These figures are very encouraging. The early and prompt injection of "Serum" before waiting to hear the result of Bacteriological examination, in fact, in any suspicious case of sore throat, robs Diphtheria of much of its terrors.

TUBERCULOSIS OF THE LUNGS.—8 cases were notified during the year, as against 17 in 1922. 5 cases died during the year, 3 Males and 2 Females, their ages 46, 37, 31, 31, 62, that is to say, 4 amongst this number were in the prime of Life. The disease is too far advanced, their natural resistance to the disease too weakened, by the time the Tubercle Bacilli can be demonstrated in the sputum. They cannot all be admitted to Sanatorium nor kept there long enough. On their return home to dark, damp houses, the disease again gets the upper hand, and their downward course is seldom averted. Dry houses, sunlight, and fresh air, would do much to help them, how many of the working class can obtain these conditions, inimical to the Tubercle Bacillus?

PNEUMONIA.—2 cases only were notified, and 6 deaths. Acute Lobar Pneumonia is a notifiable disease, also Influenzal Pneumonia. Medical Practitioners still fail to notify these to the M.O.H.

SMALL POX.—Again this year we are fortunate not to have any cases notified, although prevalent in the West Riding and North Riding. The epidemic is still spreading, in England and Wales, still showing a mild form of the disease, still causing a heavy expenditure on the Rates, and the apathy of the public is astonishing. The epidemic has served to emphasise the *certain* remedy, Vaccination and Re-Vaccination, and yet people are to be found unconvinced of its efficacy. I am sure the present epidemic will spread and assume greater virulence as it does so. More than half the children in the District are protected by Vaccination the other half are not.

TUBERCULOSIS.—other forms, i.e. Glandular and Bone disease. 2 cases were notified and there were 2 deaths. both Male children aged 10 & 4. It is established now, beyond a doubt, that the Bovine Tubercle Bacillus is responsible for this form of Tuberculosis, the infection being introduced through drinking milk contaminated with Tubercle Bacilli. This is a terrible form of disease in young children. By exposure of the naked body to sunlight, or artificial sunlight e.g. carbon arc lamps, happily the disease can be arrested, but the maiming and deformity of the child too often remains. We know that milk is the ideal food for infants and young children, and we give them “dirty” milk and milk swarming with Tubercle Bacilli and other micro-organisms. We tell the Mothers to boil the milk which kills the organisms, but also at the same time deprives the milk of valuable “vitamins” needed for healthy growth of the body tissues, so we warn them at the same time to give fruit juices. Why not concentrate on a “clean” milk supply? Clean handling, storing and milking. Clean accommodation for the cows, with plenty of fresh air circulating, and ample light, and Tuberculosis in cattle would die out of the herds.

HOUSING.—The population of this District in the middle of 1923 was 11,030. Total number of houses 2,684. Working class houses 2,320. At the end of the year there were 69 houses not “reasonably” fit for habitation, and 174 houses totally unfit for habitation. These are all gross cases. There are plenty that could with justification be included in the above two categories. Houses dark and damp. There is a scarcity of houses in the majority of the parishes, and overcrowding in Acomb, Poppleton, Whixley, Great Ouseburn, and Boroughbridge. There is some building activity at Acomb, but a scheme must be evolved without further delay to ensure dry, well-lighted and roomy houses for the labouring classes, to be let at a reasonable rent, say from 3/6 to 5/- a week.

WATER SUPPLY.—There were no developments during 1923. There was an insufficient supply at Marton, Knapton and Boroughbridge; Knapton water being the outstanding feature. 14 samples of water practically serving the whole village were taken, with the following result: good 1; doubtful 1; suspicious 1; polluted 11. 5 other samples were taken from odd houses elsewhere, were satisfactory. When pure, it is excessively hard, rendering it unsuitable for drinking and domestic purposes. We are still in urgent need of a comprehensive scheme to supply the greater part of the district with a pure soft water by pipe line. The offer of the Harrogate Water Works to supply such a water to Boroughbridge, where it would be a God send, has apparently got no further. It seems a pity that with the abundant water supply of this county, it cannot be harnessed to supply us with electric light in the rural districts, as at Linton and Newton-on-Ouse already, or conveyed to us purified to our houses for drinking and domestic purposes.

DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.—There were no developments during 1923. New sewers are wanted at Acomb, and defective sewers require renewal at Green Hammerton. It is not yet decided whether York or Great Ouseburn Rural District Council shall deal with the sewerage provided for in the new Town Planning Scheme, for Acomb, Upper and Nether Poppleton, and Knapton, which was the subject of a Government Inquiry in 1921, approved of, but still hung up, until this, apparantly more important question, is decided.

CLOSET ACCOMMODATION.—There are still a few Privies with open middens, but by far the majority are covered. 6 Privies were re-constructed as W.Cs. and 12 more as dry earth closets, 4 additional W.Cs. were provided for old property. 18 W.Cs. were constructed for new houses, and 12 dry earth closets.

SCAVENGING.—There were no developments during 1923. Scavenging is carried out by the Rural District Council at Acomb at an annual cost of £333, and by a Contractor at Boroughbridge at an annual cost of £70. It is to be regretted that owners and occupiers of houses in the villages do not first burn their refuse, and then bury it deeply in the gardens, especially the tins and bottles, so unsightly and dangerous, which are usually thrown out on to any convenient space, which often happens to be their neighbours.

NUISANCE INSPECTIONS.—143 Inspections were made by your Sanitary Inspector for Nuisances alone in 1923. 96 were reported, 11 being in hand at the end of 1922, 107 needed abatement, and 92 were abated during the year, leaving 15 still to be dealt with at the end of 1923. 88 informal notices were served, and 77 complied with. 4 Statutory notices were served and 4 complied with. There were no legal proceedings taken.

To conclude, I have to acknowledge the assistance, readily accorded to me, in the compilation of this Report by your Sanitary Inspector, Mr. C. Cawood.

J. M. BENSON,

Medical Officer of Health.

